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Document Subject: COMMENTS OF GENERAL VIDES CASANOVA ON COUP PLOTTINGC
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WNINTEL INTEL SUBJECT: COMMENTS OF GENERAL VIDES CASANOVA ON COUP PLOTTING

1. ON 3 FEBRUARY, GENERAL VIDES CASANOVA, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE NATIONAL GUARD, ANALYZED THE POSSIBILITIES OF A COUP BY THE ARMED FORCES TO REMOVE MINISTER OF DEFENSE, GENERAL JOSE GUILLERMO ((GARCIA)), AND PRESIDENT ALVARO MAGANA. VIDES SAID THAT THE MAJOR POTENTIAL FOR SUCH AN ACTION LIES AMONG OFFICERS OF THE SALVADORAN AIR FORCE (FAS) INFLUENCED BY THE NATIONALIST REPUBLICAN ALLIANCE (ARENA). VIDES SAID THAT ARENA LEADER, ROBERTO D'AUBUISSON IS THE MOST DANGEROUS FACTOR BECAUSE HE COULD CONVINCE A SUFFICIENT NUMBER OF AIR FORCE AND OTHER OFFICERS THAT A COUP WAS NECESSARY. HOWEVER, VIDES SAID HE DOES NOT BELIEVE A COUP IS IMMINENT BECAUSE MOST ARMED FORCES OFFICERS ARE CONVINCED THAT THE UNITED STATES WOULD WITHDRAW MILITARY AID AS A RESULT.

2. VIDES SAID THAT AIR FORCE CHIEF, COL. JUAN RAFAEL ((BUSTILLO)), ONE OF THE OFFICERS WHO SUPPORTS GARCIA'S OUTSTER, IS AN HONEST AND LOYAL OFFICER WHO OPPOSES GARCIA BASED ON HIS OWN CONVICTIONS AND THAT BUSTILLO WILL TRY NOT TO LOSE CONTROL OF HIS OFFICERS TO D'AUBUISSON. VIDES NOTED THAT AIR FORCE PILOTS ARE SPREADING THEIR OPINIONS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY WHILE CONDUCTING FLIGHT OPERATIONS.

3. VIDES EXPLAINED THAT ARENA HAS FOR SOME TIME SEEN GARCIA AS ITS PRINCIPAL OBSTACLE TO STOPPING THE REFORM PROGRAMS. VIDES VIEWS THE CURRENT CRISIS AS THE CULMINATION OF A LONG CAMPAIGN CONDUCTED BY ARENA MAINLY THROUGH THE MEDIA, WHICH THE RIGHTISTS OWN. ACCORDING TO VIDES, THE CONSTANT ATTACKS AGAINST GARCIA WEAKENED HIS IMAGE THROUGH THE LATTER PART OF 1982. THIS ALLOWED ARENA TO MAKE INROADS WITH MILITARY OFFICERS, MAINLY IN THE AIR FORCE, BY SUPPORTING THEIR FRUSTRATIONS AND DESIRES THAT GARCIA STEP DOWN FOR ALLEGEDLY MISMANAGING THE WAR.

4. WHEN DISCUSSING SUPPORT FOR A POSSIBLE COUP, VIDES

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SAID THAT OFFICERS AT THE FIRST INFANTRY BRIGADE, COMMANDED BY COLONEL ADOLFO ((BLANDON)), AND AT MILITARY DETACHMENT TWO (THE FORMER COMMAND OF LTC. SIGIFREDO ((OCHOA)) PEREZ) WOULD BE SYMPATHETIC TO SUCH PLANNING. HE SAID THAT OTHER OFFICERS SYMPATHETIC TO MAJOR ((MAJANO)) WOULD JOIN THEM AS THEY ALSO WISH TO SEE GARCIA REMOVED.

5. VIDES STATED THAT THE ARMED FORCES INVESTIGATION COMMISSION COMPOSED OF SIX SENIOR OFFICERS, WHICH MET FOR THE FIRST TIME ON 3 FEBRUARY, IS THE LEGAL BODY CONSTITUTED TO REVIEW GARCIA'S PERFORMANCE AND LOOK INTO POSSIBLE INJUSTICES IN THE ARMED FORCES. HE SAID THAT RIGHTIST ELEMENTS WANT TO PROMOTE THE PRESSURE AGAINST GARCIA AND IF POSSIBLE HAVE HIM REPLACED BY PRO-ARENA DEFENSE MINISTER. ARENA THEREFORE OPPOSES THE COMMISSION, AS IT WILL PROBABLY PRODUCE A MODERATE SOLUTION, PERHAPS ABSOLVING GARCIA OF ANY SERIOUS WRONGDOING, BUT SUGGESTING THAT HE RESIGN AS A MEANS OF DEFLATING THE CRISIS. (WHEN VIDES SPOKE OF THE COMMISSION'S FINAL REPORT, IT APPEARED TO THE C/O THAT HE WAS HINTING THAT THE SOLUTION HE MENTIONED MIGHT ALREADY BE UNDER CONSIDERATION.



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